

# Stilwell's North Burma Campaign: A Case Study in Multinational Mission Command

A Monograph

by

MAJ Hayden D. Scardina  
United States Army



School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

2017

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 13-03-2017		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) JUN 2016 – MAY 2017	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Stilwell's North Burma Campaign: A Case Study in Multinational Mission Command				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Hayden D. Scardina				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Advanced Military Studies Program.				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <p>In 2011, the US Army published its capstone operational doctrine, which included its new mission command philosophy. The operational doctrine highlights the need for the Army to integrate multinational partners into its operations. The mission command philosophy has generated much discussion within the US Army since its adoption. Despite the presence of elements of the mission command philosophy in US Army doctrine since the beginning of the twentieth century and a rich history of providing multinational leadership, publications from the Army Press and Combat Studies Institute have not explored the use of the mission command philosophy during multinational campaigns.</p> <p>This study focuses on General Joseph Stilwell's ability to apply the mission command philosophy during his North Burma Campaign. Stilwell led a force composed mainly of divisions from Chiang Kai-Shek's National Revolutionary Army during the campaign. His leadership aided the US effort to reestablish its ground line of communication with its Chinese Nationalist allies. Stilwell's performance during the campaign provides a case study of achieving unity of effort while using an operational concept similar to Unified Land Operations and the mission command philosophy.</p>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Unified Land Operations; Mission Command Philosophy; Unified Action; Multinational Operations; Joseph Stilwell; China; Burma; India; Chiang Kai-Shek; Sun Li-jen; Gordon Seagrave; Frank Merrill; Lewis Pick					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  43	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON MAJ Hayden Scardina
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code) 913-684-8048

## Monograph Approval Page

Name of Candidate: MAJ Hayden D. Scardina

Monograph Title: Stilwell's North Burma Campaign: A Case Study in Multinational Mission Command

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Monograph Director  
Anthony E. Carlson, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_, Seminar Leader  
James S. Powell, COL, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies  
James C. Markert, COL

Accepted this 25th day of May 2017 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Prisco R. Hernandez, PhD

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

Fair use determination or copyright permission has been obtained for the inclusion of pictures, maps, graphics, and any other works incorporated into this manuscript. A work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright, however further publication or sale of copyrighted images is not permissible.

## Abstract

Stilwell's North Burma Campaign: A Case Study in Multinational Command, by MAJ Hayden D. Scardina, US Army, 46 pages.

In 2011, the US Army published its capstone operational doctrine, which included its new mission command philosophy. The operational doctrine highlights the need for the Army to integrate multinational partners into its operations. The mission command philosophy has generated much discussion within the US Army since its adoption. Despite the presence of elements of the mission command philosophy in US Army doctrine since the beginning of the twentieth century and a rich history of providing multinational leadership, publications from the Army Press and Combat Studies Institute have not explored the use of the mission command philosophy during multinational campaigns.

This study focuses on General Joseph Stilwell's ability to apply the mission command philosophy during his North Burma Campaign. Stilwell led a force composed mainly of divisions from Chiang Kai-Shek's National Revolutionary Army during the campaign. His leadership aided the US effort to reestablish its ground line of communication with its Chinese Nationalist allies. Stilwell's performance during the campaign provides a case study of achieving unity of effort while using an operational concept similar to Unified Land Operations and the mission command philosophy.

## Contents

Acknowledgement.....	v
Acronyms .....	vi
Illustrations.....	vii
Introduction .....	1
Synchronizing Operational Theory and Mission Command Philosophy.....	5
General Stilwell's North Burma Campaign .....	13
Conclusion and Implications.....	37
Bibliography .....	44

## Acknowledgement

Thank you to my wife, Caitlin, and sons, Sheridan and Grant, for their support and understanding while I completed this project. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Anthony E. Carlson and Colonel James S. Powell for their guidance during the construction of this monograph. This project would not have been possible without the support of my family and the faculty at the School of Advanced Military Studies.

## Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AOC	Army Operating Concept
C2	Command and Control
CBI	China-Burma-India
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CSA	Chief of Staff of the US Army
CSI	Combat Studies Institute
FM	Field Manual
FSR	Field Service Regulations
JP	Joint Publication
KMT	Kuomintang
LOC	Line of Communication
NRA	National Revolutionary Army
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
ULO	Unified Land Operations
UA	Unified Action
WWII	World War II

## Illustrations

1	Overview of Mission Command Philosophy.....	3
2	Stilwell's Positions in Southeast Asia Command.....	24
3	Entering the Hukawng Valley, October 1943.....	28
4	Operations in Northern Hukawng Valley, January 1944.....	31
5	Tonnage Shipped from India to China by Air: 1944.....	37



## Introduction

A watershed event occurred in US Army doctrine when Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the US Army (CSA), approved the release of Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. The 2011 manual stated, “The foundation of unified land operations is built on initiative, decisive action, and mission command.”<sup>1</sup> This statement represented the first time an Army manual connected an operational concept, unified land operations (ULO), with a specific command philosophy, mission command. Grasping the significance of the relationship between ULO and mission command requires a comprehension of each term.

The Army created ULO to describe its contribution to Unified Action (UA), the military doctrine of the US Armed Forces. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* defines UA as, “a comprehensive approach that synchronizes, coordinates, and when appropriate, integrates military operations with the activities of other governmental and nongovernmental organizations to achieve unity of effort.”<sup>2</sup> As an operational concept, UA envisions the US Armed Forces conducting operations alongside governmental and nongovernmental partners, to include foreign militaries and organizations.<sup>3</sup>

ULO describes the Army’s role in UA. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations*, defines ULO as the ability to conduct “simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability. . .tasks to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and consolidate gains to prevent conflict, shape the operational environment, and win our nation’s wars as part of unified action.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Unified Action* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), xi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC:

This definition elucidates four key ideas. First, it reiterates that ULO exists as a component of UA, which implies working with a range of partners. Second, the concept places a premium on the offense. The operational concept articulates its preference for the offense through the idea of seizing and exploiting the initiative. Third, the definition refers to the idea of shaping the operational environment. The operational environment includes the balance of conditions weighing on a commander's decision, including the traditional influences of terrain, weather, and the enemy as well as a commander's ability to shape the political, social, and cultural dynamics influencing an operation. Lastly, the concept envisions the Army conducting a combination of simultaneous offense, defense, and stability tasks. The Army developed the mission command philosophy to complement its operational concept.<sup>5</sup>

The Army adopted the mission command philosophy because it believed ULO required a command philosophy that emphasized the central role of the commander to cultivate an atmosphere requiring subordinate initiative. The Army defines its mission command philosophy as, "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."<sup>6</sup> Mission command's six principles—build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk—highlight the central role of the commander and his relationship to his subordinates.<sup>7</sup> The Army harnessed the Western experience of command to progress a philosophy that empowers leaders to generate rapid

---

Government Printing Office, 2016), 3-1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 3-1, 5-3.

<sup>6</sup> ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1-3–1-4.

decisions and integrate UA partners into operations when combined with the mission command warfighting function.<sup>8</sup>

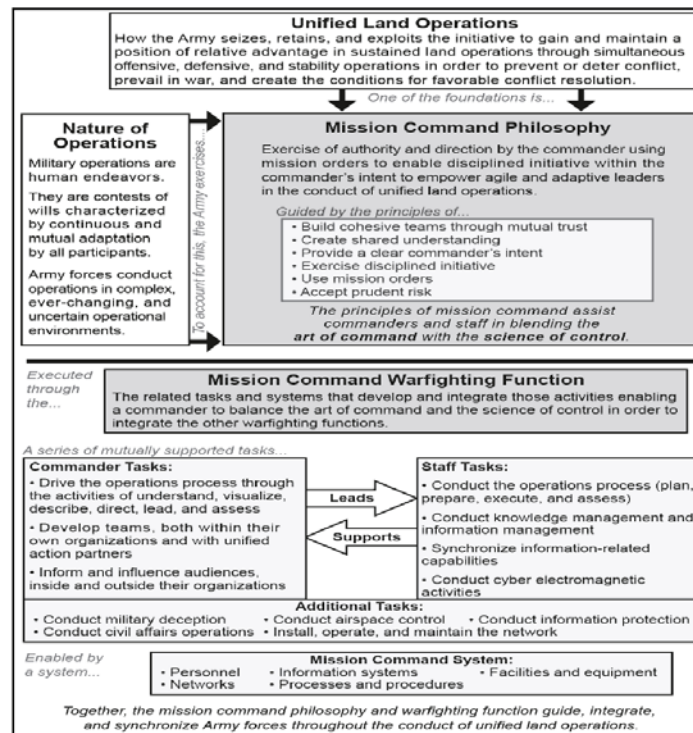


Figure 1. Overview of Mission Command Philosophy. ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

Doctrine also refers to a group of commander-centric tasks as a warfighting function.

The mission command warfighting function includes the tasks of developing teams and driving the operations process. The commander uses mission command, the philosophy and warfighting function, to integrate the other warfighting functions—movement and maneuver, fires, intelligence, sustainment, and protection. Current mission command scholarship published by the Army Press and Combat Studies Institute, focuses on limited tactical engagements, overlooks the relationship between the mission command philosophy and the mission command warfighting function.

<sup>8</sup> Martin E. Dempsey, *A White Paper: Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 2012), 3-4; ADRP 6-0, 1-1–1-3.

The Army's visions for future conflicts and its leadership philosophy may be in tension. Since competing national interests and cultures influence commander-subordinate dynamics, how can a commander develop a multinational team capable of executing ULO? Army doctrine advises commanders to reconcile this tension by achieving unity of effort, the cooperation between nations to achieve common goals. Unfortunately, current scholarship on the mission command philosophy published by Army in-house publications does not explain how past commanders applied the doctrine to achieve unity of effort while leading multinational operations. The absence of case studies describing leadership in multinational operations misses an opportunity to explore a relevant aspect of the exercise of Army leadership.<sup>9</sup>

World War II (WWII) provided several examples of multinational leadership. General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, led British, Canadian, and French Allies to defeat Nazi Germany. Beginning in the fall of 1944, US Army Gen. Jacob L. Devers commanded the 6th Army Group, composed of an army each from the United States and France, following Operation Dragoon. Devers, like Eisenhower, had a reputation for building consensus and mediating conflicts among American, British, and French forces during the destruction of the Third Reich.<sup>10</sup> Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell provided a third example of WWII multinational leadership and team building. He commanded a multinational force, consisting mostly of Chinese National Revolutionary Army (NRA) divisions, to recapture northern Burma as the equivalent of a corps commander. Current mission command philosophy scholarship has not accounted for the Army's rich history of leading multinational coalitions.

Army leaders should embark on a more comprehensive study of the interaction between the Army's command philosophy and operational concept. This scholarship will require the study

---

<sup>9</sup> ADRP 6-0, 1-1-1-2, 2-1-2-2.

<sup>10</sup> John A. Adams, *General Jacob Devers: World War II's Forgotten Four Star* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 166, 214-15, 391-92.

of campaigns with UA partners. Stilwell's experience as a commander in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater provides a unique case study for this subject because he commanded in the lowest priority WWII theater with multinational partners from vastly different cultures. Additionally, Stilwell adapted his operating environment and put himself in a position of advantage before his partners' national interests began to converge. The Stilwell case study demonstrated how a multinational commander created an environment where his subordinates and staff seized the initiative by changing the operational environment before attempting to defeat the enemy. Stilwell's performance in the CBI Theater during his North Burma Campaign provides a historical case study of achieving unity of effort while using an operational concept similar to ULO and the mission command philosophy.

### The Evolution of Synchronizing Operation Theory and Command Philosophy in Army Doctrine

US Army doctrine credits Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the Prussian General Staff, 1857-1887, with inspiring the concept of mission command philosophy through his adoption of *Auftragstaktik*, translated as "mission tactics." Even though Moltke used the term *auftrag* (task) in his writings, *Auftragstaktik* did not enter the German Army's lexicon until after WWII. Even though Moltke never used the term, his mission tactics concept inspired both *Auftragstaktik* and the mission command philosophy. Military historian Robert Citino argues that the concept of *Auftragstaktik* describes the nineteenth-century political and social context of the relationship between the Prussian king and the Junker nobility. In this relationship, when the king told his nobles to complete a task, they did so without concern for the directions from the general staff. Citino's argument highlights the cultural and social influences on a given army's concept of command.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 1-15–1-16; John T. Nelsen II, "Auftragstaktik: A

Moltke's mission tactics rested on the assumption that commanders needed to take independent action on nineteenth-century European battlefields. He wrote, "High commanders . . . must receive definite tasks but not be limited in the choice of means to accomplish them by the fire and free use of their subordinate units."<sup>12</sup> In contrast to Enlightenment era military philosophers, who favored prescriptive organizations and tactics, Moltke followed Romantic-era philosophers by rejecting rigid rules to allow commanders the freedom to organize and use the forces under their command. Moltke favored subordinate commanders who possessed the ability for independent action to move large armies and react to unforeseen events while on the offense.<sup>13</sup>

Moltke's concept of command entered US Army doctrine at the beginning of the twentieth century. The US Army's 1905 *Field Service Regulations* stated:

An order should not trespass on the province of a subordinate. It should contain everything which is beyond the independent authority of the subordinate, but nothing more. When the transmission of orders requires a considerable period of time during which the situation may change, detailed instructions should be avoided. The same rule holds good when an order may have to be carried out under circumstances which the originator of the order cannot completely forecast; in such cases a letter of guidance is more appropriate. It should lay stress upon *the object to be obtained*, and leave open the means to be employed.<sup>14</sup>

The regulation's description of an ideal order echoes Moltke's mission tactics where the subordinate maintains free use of his means to accomplish a given task. The US Army's vision of command and control and its cultural predilection for offensive operations continued to evolve to

---

Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters* (September 1987): 21; Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 308-09.

<sup>12</sup> Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, ed. Daniel Hughes (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995), 156-157.

<sup>13</sup> Citino, *German Way of War*, 144-145; Moltke, *Art of War*, 132-33, 156-57.

<sup>14</sup> Field Service Regulations (FSR) 1905, *Field Service Regulations of the United States Army 1905 with Amendments to 1908* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1908), 29-30.

meet the political, social, and military concerns as the Army transitioned from the Cold War to the Global War on Terror.

Command and control (C2), the US Army's command philosophy during the last decade of the Cold War, also reflected Moltke's ideas. The 1983 and 1986 editions of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, listed four recommendations for how commanders should use C2. First, a commander should provide an initial plan to the subordinate so they understood the commander's intent. Second, a commander should provide the subordinate with operational and tactical freedom to empower the subordinate to use initiative in pursuit of this intent. Third, C2 must galvanize shared understanding. Finally, a commander should communicate with subordinates using mission orders. C2 added shared understanding to Moltke's view of providing a subordinate with an intent, through the mechanism of mission orders, and then allowing the subordinate free use of their means within this intent.<sup>15</sup>

In 1987, CSA Gen. Carl E. Vuono, founded the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The program simulated combat for corps and divisions to rehearse AirLand Battle doctrine. Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, Vuono's successor, introduced battle command in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5. The manual defined battle command as, "the art of battle decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions."<sup>16</sup> The 2003 edition of FM 100-5 provided a simplified definition: "The exercise of command in operations against a hostile, thinking enemy."<sup>17</sup> Doctrine's increasing emphasis on "battle" occurred during a period when the United States lost the Soviet Union as its principal near peer competitor.

---

<sup>15</sup> FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 2, 18, 31-32.

<sup>16</sup> FM 100-5 (1993), 2-14-2-15.

<sup>17</sup> FM 100-5 (2003), 5-1.

In addition to coinciding with the end of the Cold War, the Army in the 1990s began fielding automated tools to enable commanders to visualize the battlefield and disseminate orders to subordinate units. Many of these tools resided on computer systems in a commander's headquarters. Gen. Frederick M. Franks, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commanding general from 1991 to 1994, feared that automation would cause the headquarters to become the focal point of warfare during future conflicts that were likely to be less predictable and more decentralized than the Cold War. He argued:

We must not be captured by our current command post fixations, large tactical staffs, nor our current programs to essentially make more efficient a worn-out C2 engine. I have stopped using command and control—not because I like to invent new terms, but because it has too much excess intellectual baggage that I find gets in the way of discussing the art of command. We must be captured by a vision of battle command.<sup>18</sup>

Franks' statement echoed the 1993 edition of FM 100-5, which stated, “commanders of neither large nor small units can visualize the battlefield and direct and synchronize the efforts of their units from a computer screen at the command post.”<sup>19</sup> The 1993 FM 100-5 and Franks's concerns about commanders commanding from command posts suggests that the Army evolved from C2 to battle command to counter the potential negative consequences from automating headquarters.<sup>20</sup>

In 2003, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, the 35th CSA, approved the release of FM 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*. The publication occurred during the early phases of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The manual introduced *mission command* into Army doctrine, defining it as, “the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders for effective mission accomplishment.”<sup>21</sup> The manual

---

<sup>18</sup> Frederick M. Franks in Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet (TRADOC Pam) 525-100-1, *Battle Command: US Army Dynamic Concept* (Fort Monroe, VA: Government Printing Office, 1994), 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> FM 100-5 (1993), 2-14.

<sup>20</sup> Tom Clancy, with Fred Franks Jr., *Into the Storm: a Study in Command* (New York: Putnam, 1997), 503-504.

<sup>21</sup> FM 6-0 (2003), 1-17.



articulated four elements of mission command: commander's intent, subordinate's initiative, mission orders, and resource allocation. FM 6-0 also introduced the concept of detailed command, an undesirable antithesis to mission command. A commander uses detailed command when he centralizes decision-making, usually because of his presence on the battlefield, constraining the subordinate from altering the plan during execution. Despite introducing a new doctrinal concept, Army officers seemed uncertain about the role of mission command.<sup>22</sup>

The uncertainty stemmed from the fact that the 2003 edition of FM 6-0 introduced a new concept while retaining the old "battle command." The manual's fourth chapter, for instance, included a section titled "Battle Command." This section included the 2001 FM 3-0's definition of battle command, which the Army did not update until 2008. The writings of mid-grade officers at the Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth revealed the confusion stemming from inconsistent and unclear doctrinal terminology. Between 2003 and 2010, officers in these professional military education schools wrote 155 theses or monographs with *battle command* located in the abstract and 87 using *mission command*. Between 2011 and 2015, the students published 186 theses or monographs on mission command and not a single paper on battle command. The sudden departure of "battle command" occurred as the Obama administration decreased the US Army's commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan and its leaders refocused on training and preparedness for future conflicts.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> FM 6-0 (2003), i, 1-14, 1-16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 4-24. This monograph calculated the number of School of Advanced Military Studies monographs and Command and General Staff College theses written on battle command and mission command by searching both collections at the Combined Arms Research Library website, available at <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search> and accessed by the author on October 7, 2016. The author calculated the theses and monographs by searching the terms "battle command" and "mission command" in the abstracts of the monograph and theses, which is found by searching for the "exact phrase" and in the "description" fields in the library's advanced search. This data shows mid-grade Army officers, exposed to the Army's most up-to-date doctrine, continued to write about battle command up until 2011 when it ceased.

The Army completed the transition to mission command philosophy under CSAs Generals George W. Casey, Jr., Martin E. Dempsey, and Odierno. They emphasized mission command philosophy and linked it to the Army's operational doctrine. Casey founded the Mission Command Center of Excellence at Fort Leavenworth in 2010 and redesignated the Battle Command Training Program as the Mission Command Training Program. Dempsey and Odierno also initiated and led a large-scale doctrine rewriting campaign known as "Doctrine 2015." This campaign allowed the Army to restructure its doctrine and publish it in a short timeframe with an enhanced consistency between publications. For example, Odierno oversaw the publication of ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, and ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, with six months between documents. He also used the new Army doctrinal hierarchy to publish the more detailed Army doctrinal reference publications ADRP 3-0 and ADRP 6-0 in May of 2012. The synchronized publication of the Army's capstone operational manual with the manual describing the mission command philosophy validated the claim that mission command constitutes the foundation of ULO.<sup>24</sup>

Lastly, the Army's Combined Arms Center communicated the mission command philosophy to the Army through publications by its Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Press. CSI developed several publications to explain battle command to the Army, including two collections of monographs: *Studies in Battle Command* (1995) and *66 Stories of Battle Command* (2000). Similarly, in 2013, CSI published *16 Cases of Mission Command* (2013), *Training for Decisive Action: Stories of Mission Command* (2014), and *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World* (2016).<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Tatjana Christian, "TRADOC Discusses Doctrine 2015 During AUSA," *US Army*, October 12, 2011, accessed February 2, 2017, <https://www.army.mil/article/67119>.

<sup>25</sup> *Studies in Battle Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1995); Adela Frame and James W. Lussier, ed., *66 Stories of Battle Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2000); Donald Wright, ed., *16 Cases of Mission Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2013); Carl W. Fischer, ed., *Training for Decisive Action: Stories of Mission Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2014); Nathan K. Finney

The current mission command philosophy scholarship represents a positive trend in communicating the doctrine to the operational force. The 2013 publication, *16 Cases of Mission Command*, explains the doctrine in the context of tactical engagements conducted by the forces from a single nation's army resulting in positive operational or tactical outcomes. These case studies use of the six principles of mission command philosophy as a lens to evaluate tactical actions, but they do not largely differ from the case studies contained in *Studies in Battle Command* eighteen years earlier. The similarity between the two publications reflects the subtle trends concerning the concept of command, with each paradigm built on the former without entirely repudiating its predecessor. *16 Cases of Mission Command* coincided with the founding of the Mission Command Center of Excellence and therefore contributed to eliminating battle command from the Army lexicon.<sup>26</sup>

Gen. David G. Perkins also contributed to connecting the mission command philosophy to ULO after becoming commanding general of TRADOC in 2014. In his previous assignment as the commanding general of the Combined Arms Center, Perkins wrote the foreword for *16 Cases of Mission Command*. In the foreword, Perkins explained, "Mission Command empowers leaders at all levels, allowing them to synchronize all warfighting functions and information systems to seize retain, and exploit the initiative."<sup>27</sup> During his first year as the commander of TRADOC,

---

and Jonathan P. Klug, ed., *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Press, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Wright, *16 Cases of Mission Command*, 1-16, 17-28. This source provides two examples of corps or division commanders using the mission command philosophy in battle. These vignettes occur at the tactical level of warfare and the participants come from the army of a single state. *Studies in Battle Command* explains battle command using case studies from the time of Gustavus Adolphus to the US war in Vietnam. The last case study, Lt. Col. Douglas P. Scalard's "The Battle of Hamburger Hill: Battle Command in Difficult Terrain Against a Determined Enemy," informs the reader that the 2nd and 4th Battalions of the 1st Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam participated in the Battle of Hamburger Hill, but their leaders are nameless and do not affect the battle's outcome. The author limits the discussion of command to the three battalions of the 101st Airborne Division that participated in the battle without addressing the multinational partners in the campaign.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in, Wright, *16 Cases of Mission Command*, iii.

Perkins published *The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (AOC). The AOC, while not doctrine, provides a medium for the Army's senior leaders to communicate how they envision the Army operating in 2025 and beyond.<sup>28</sup> During the fall of 2015, Perkins told an audience at the US Army Sergeants Major Academy that:

Mission command is all about leadership because if you don't have leadership, you cannot execute mission command. If you can't conduct mission command, you can't do unified land operations, and if you can't do unified land operations, you probably are not going to win in a complex world.<sup>29</sup>

The 2016 CSI publication, *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World*, connected mission command to both ULO and the AOC. The strength of this publication resides in its ability to communicate mission command, both the philosophy and the warfighting function, within the context of contemporary operations. The publication highlights best practices and lessons learned from the Army's participation in recent conflicts, including its present conflict with the Islamic State. The anthology's case studies possess currency in the study of mission command allowing soldiers to apply the lessons to current conflicts. In particular, the book provides lessons learned with developing multinational teams in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia. However, these essays fall short in their description of mission command in multinational operations as envisioned in ULO and the AOC. The multinational partners in the articles reside in the background, remaining nameless and voiceless. The fusion of mission command and multinational operations in the Army's past, present, and future requires the next evolution of mission command scholarship to introduce case studies highlighting the relationship between multinational operations and the mission command philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (Fort Eustis, VA: Training and Doctrine Command, 2014), i.

<sup>29</sup> David Crozier, "Perkins Provides Senior NCOs Clarity On Future Army," US Army, October 5, 2015, accessed January 24, 2017, [https://www.army.mil/article/156645/Perkins\\_provides\\_senior\\_NCOs\\_clarity\\_on\\_future\\_Army/](https://www.army.mil/article/156645/Perkins_provides_senior_NCOs_clarity_on_future_Army/).

<sup>30</sup> Finney and Klug, *Mission Command in the 21st Century*. The twelfth case study in this publication, John J. McGrath's "The Battle for Observation Post Bari Alai," describes an engagement,

## General Stilwell's North Burma Campaign

The British Empire pursued colonies and spheres of influence in Asia during the nineteenth century. Great Britain annexed Burma during three Anglo-Burmese Wars beginning in 1824. By the conclusion of the third war in 1885, the empire administered Burma as part of British India. During the same period, Britain waged the Opium Wars against China. By the conclusion of the Second Opium War, 1856-60, Britain annexed Hong Kong and forced the Qing Dynasty to open trade to the colonial powers under the unequal treaties. Great Britain collected tariffs on behalf of the Qing dynasty, hindering the development of government institutions. In 1912, the dynasty collapsed because of weak governing institutions and the inability to respond to internal and external pressures. Great Britain dominated China the century prior to WWII, contributing to a weak Chinese state and a collective feeling of humiliation at the hands of the British Empire.<sup>31</sup>

The United States also treated China unfairly during the century preceding WWII. In 1844, the United States signed the Treaty of Wanghia with China, allowing it to gain the same rights China granted to the European powers. Even though the United States did not dominate China by gaining a sphere of influence, it nonetheless benefitted from European policies. Far from a bystander, the United States participated in the Boxer Rebellion military intervention at the beginning of the twentieth-century. Additionally, the United States supported Japan's receipt of Santung from Germany's former sphere of influence in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Finally, the United States and Great Britain did not renounce their unequal treaty rights until 1943. The

---

which included participation by the 6th *Kandak* (Battalion), 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps of the Afghan National Army as well as a small contingent of Afghan National Police. In the style of the current mission command philosophy scholarship, the unified action partners in the case study remain nameless, accompanying the US force. The anonymity of multinational partners in these case studies probably results from insufficient primary sources.

<sup>31</sup> S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 27-28.

alignment of China, the British Empire, and the United States to counter Imperial Japan during WWII emerged out of necessity. The interaction among the countries prior to the war did not cultivate mutual trust between China and its allies.<sup>32</sup>

The United States could claim a better relationship with China in the decades prior to WWII than Great Britain. Most of America's pro-China policies stemmed from Presidents Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the Theodore Roosevelt Administration, the United States supported Chinese territorial integrity during both the Russian expansion into Manchuria, 1902-03, and the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05. In 1937, the United States continued the policy of supporting Chinese territorial integrity during the Franklin Roosevelt Administration when Japan invaded Manchuria. The United States gradually applied economic pressure against Japan beginning in 1939, and by 1941, President Roosevelt ordered a Japanese asset freeze. This action and Imperial Japan's lack of critical natural resources limited its ability to sustain, or increase, economic and military activity. The asset freeze partially contributed to the Japanese decision to attack Pearl Harbor. At the beginning of WWII, Chiang Kai-shek doubted that the United States possessed the ability to remain a trusted and enduring partner.<sup>33</sup>

Chiang Kai-shek led the Kuomintang (KMT), or Chinese Nationalist Party. The KMT competed with the Chinese Communist Party for control of China after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. Chiang started as a trusted general of Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the KMT. As a general, Chiang led a mission to Moscow to solicit military aid from the Soviet Union. After his return, he founded the Army Officers Academy at Whampoa with the assistance of Soviet advisors. Chiang desired an academy to commission second lieutenants to develop the leadership for the KMT's National Revolutionary Army. Sun and Chiang envisioned a national army free

---

<sup>32</sup> A. Doak Barnett, *China and the Major Powers in East Asia* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1977), 157-59; Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> A. Doak Barnett, *China and the Major Powers in East Asia*, 154-57.

from dependency on other nations, warlords, and mercenaries. In 1925, Chiang led an army, composed of many of his cadets, on the Eastern Expedition and a subsequent Northern Expedition in 1926. The expeditions defeated uncooperative provincial leaders, increased the size of the NRA as it absorbed provincial soldiers, and catapulted Chiang to the top of the KMT's hierarchy. When Chiang assumed leadership of the KMT in 1928, he had proven himself as an organizer, trainer, and leader of military forces. These are the same skills he would require from the United States to rebuild the NRA in the 1940s following near continuous warfare during the preceding decades.<sup>34</sup>

China faced internal and external threats when the United States entered WWII. Internally, Chiang Kai-shek and his Chinese Nationalist Party had been at war with the Chinese Communist Party since 1927. Externally, the Chinese had been at war with Japan since 1937. The Chiang government exercised weak central control of the NRA, compared to the control maintained by Western governments over their armies. This lack of control resulted from a legacy of subjugation by colonial powers, persistent conflicts, and a longstanding military system that relied on provincial warlords to raise troops to suppress regional rebellions. By late 1941, China was a weak state with few world leaders sympathetic to its plight against Imperial Japan.

President Roosevelt directed a foreign policy favorable to the Chinese Nationalist Government. In addition to supporting Chinese territorial integrity and equal terms for nations trading with China, he envisioned a post-WWII world order led by the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. The Atlantic Charter, 1 January 1942, pledging cooperation between the four powers and twenty-six other nations to defeat the Axis Powers, provided a medium for ushering in the new world order. Additionally, Roosevelt wanted China to remain in the war and divert Imperial Japan's resources to China in order to lessen resistance for US

---

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2004), 61, 66-67, 75, 114.

operations in the Pacific Theater. The president required a military strategy to attain the post-war order he envisioned.<sup>35</sup>

The first articulation of a military strategy originated at the Arcadia Conference, 24 December 1941 to 14 January 1942. During the conference, the Japanese seized Malay and Hong Kong from the British and positioned the Imperial Army to seize British Singapore, which fell a month after the conference ended. The Japanese offensive placed their army closer to Burma, the only line of communication (LOC) to deliver US lend-lease aid to a navally-blockaded China. The British and Americans met in Washington, DC, to chart a course for the war.<sup>36</sup>

The Arcadia Conference is best known for the agreement between the British and the Americans to prioritize the defeat of Germany. In addition to the “Europe First” policy, the conference also established modest, but realistic, goals for the war in the CBI for 1942-43. Due to the difficulty of communicating with China, the conference participants agreed on the need for a better system to communicate with the Supreme Commander of the Chinese Theater, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The participants floated a liaison position as the most desirable method of improving communication with the Generalissimo. Next, the participants agreed on improving the security, maintenance, and bases along the Burma Road to facilitate the movement of supplies to China. During this period, the LOC connected Rangoon, a major port, to Lashio by rail and on to Kunming by the Burma Road. Finally, the Arcadia participants desired for all of the previous measures to result in a better-equipped and more effective Chinese force. The Arcadia Conference created a liaison position to carry out the goals agreed to by the Americans and British.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Foster Rhea Dulles, *China and America: The Story of Their Relations Since 1784* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), 232.

<sup>36</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 8, 81.

<sup>37</sup> American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff Immediate Assistance to China” in *Inter-Allied Conference: Proceedings of the American-British Joint*



CSA Gen. George C. Marshall selected Stilwell to fill the liaison position to the Generalissimo. Stilwell, while not known for possessing a diplomatic style, did possess knowledge on China, including mastery of the language. He served as a military attaché to China from 1935-39. During this period, he observed the Sino-Japanese War, the kidnapping of the Generalissimo by a subordinate commander, and the movement of the Chinese capital to Chungking. Stilwell arrived in the CBI Theater with a sound understanding of the NRA, including the composition of units in each province. His prior knowledge on China would serve him well in this remote and dynamic theater.<sup>38</sup>

Stilwell departed the United States 11 February 1942 during the First Burma Campaign involving the Japanese invasion of Burma. The invasion commenced 20 January 1942, and the situation became dire after the fall of Rangoon on 6 March. The loss of Rangoon severed the last ground and sea LOCs between China and its coalition partners. During the Japanese offensive, Stilwell formulated a plan to recapture Rangoon and restore the LOC. He convinced the Generalissimo to allow him to command the Fifth and Sixth Armies in Burma. Despite Stilwell's efforts, the First Burma Campaign resulted in the coalition's expulsion from Burma and the isolation of the Chinese Nationalist Government.<sup>39</sup>

The First Burma Campaign provided Stilwell with a few positive observations he could use to design a campaign to restore the ground LOC with China. During the campaign, he used a liaison system to issue mission orders and verify the execution of the orders by his Chinese

---

*Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington DC On Twelve Occasions between December 24, 1941 and January 14, 1942* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003), 249-51. CBI did not come into existence until the Quadrant Conference in May 1942. This monograph uses the term from the outset to avoid confusing the reader and to avoid explaining the many headquarters reorganizations among the Allies and within the US Forces in South East Asia Command between 1942 and 1943.

<sup>38</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 5-6; Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 154; Ching-chun Liang, *General Stilwell in China, 1942-1944: The Full Story* (New York: St. John's University Press, 1972), 21.

<sup>39</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 97-98.

subordinates. Under this system, he issued orders through the Chinese Staff Mission to Burma, led by Lt. Gen. Lin Wei. The mission adjusted Stilwell's orders to ensure they conformed to Chinese language and NRA doctrine. The mission then forwarded the modified orders to Stilwell's Chinese subordinates. Once the orders arrived, an American liaison confirmed the Chinese recipient understood and executed the orders. In addition, the liaison system buttressed the sustainment warfighting function. As an example, Major Frank Merrill served as a liaison transportation officer during the First Burma Campaign. The liaison network ensured that he understood the supply needs of each Chinese division and where to resupply them. This network extended from Calcutta, India to the Chinese units fighting in Burma. Merrill's performance during the evacuation from Burma and understanding of sustainment and the terrain resulted in Stilwell selecting him as CBI's operations officer after the campaign.<sup>40</sup>

The First Burma Campaign also allowed Stilwell the chance to evaluate his Chinese partners. The 200th Division, assigned to Gen. Tu Yu-ming's Fifth Army, made a strong defensive stand against a Japanese division at Toungoo. Despite the strong defense, Tu did not respond to Stilwell's orders to counter-attack the Japanese with his other divisions, even though he had superior numbers. In contrast to Tu's lack of aggressiveness at Toungoo, Maj. Gen. Sun Li-jen, commander of the 38th Division and graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, demonstrated initiative during his attack on the Irrawaddy front to support the British Burma Division. Stilwell credited Sun with saving the British Burma Division by attacking a superior Japanese force, enabling the Burma Division to disengage from the enemy. His actions made him a hero in the CBI Theater. Despite the efforts of leaders like Sun, the Allies never achieved unity

---

<sup>40</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 105; Nathan N. Prefer, *Vinegar Joe's War: Stilwell's Campaigns for Burma* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000), 43.

of effort to halt the Japanese in the Irrawaddy Valley, leading to the decision to evacuate Burma.<sup>41</sup>

The campaign highlighted Stilwell's challenges in developing the NRA. His most important challenge was to clarify command. The First Burma Campaign revealed that the Generalissimo and Stilwell possessed different concepts of command. Stilwell, a product of Western culture, shared Moltke's view of command, whereas the Generalissimo practiced detailed command. Stilwell criticized the Generalissimo's leadership in his diary and explained why Tu did not attack at Toungoo. Stilwell wrote:

[W]e have lost a grand chance to slap the Japs back at Toungoo. The basic reason is Chiang K'ai-shek's meddling. Had he not gone behind my back to Tu and Lin Wei, they might have obeyed my orders. He can't keep his hands off 1,600 miles from the front, he writes endless instructions to do this and that, based on fragmentary information and a cockeyed conception of tactics. The army and division commanders are vitally interested in doing what they think he wants them to do. In justice to them all, however, it is a great deal to have them turn over a couple of armies in a vital area to a goddam foreigner that they don't know and in whom they can't have much confidence.<sup>42</sup>

Stilwell's diary entry displays his desire to establish a Western style concept of intercultural command in CBI, but his last sentence reveals he understood the true problem: a lack of cohesion. The First Burma Campaign occurred during his first four months on the job, leaving him little time to build mutual trust with his partners.

Stilwell confronted the Generalissimo on 2 April, with two demands. First, he demanded the relief of Lt. Gen. Lin Wei, who he argued had undermined his liaison system by intentionally mistranslating mission orders. Second, he demanded Chiang provide him with real command authority. The Generalissimo agreed to both. He replaced Lin Wei with Lo Cho-ying as Stilwell's executive officer. The Generalissimo also promised Lo would obey Stilwell's orders. The change

---

<sup>41</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 108, 125-27; Gordon S. Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1946), 40.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph W. Stilwell, Diary Entry, 1 April 1942, in *Stillwell Papers*, ed. Theodore H. White (1948; repr., New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 77-79.

excited Stilwell because Lo had exercised command in battle and displayed many of the same characteristics as Stilwell. Additionally, Tu had served under Lo. Stilwell concluded Lo had a better chance of motivating Tu to attack, as he failed to do at Toungoo. Stilwell, convinced that he and Chiang had forged a working relationship about C2, turned his focus to building a team capable of confronting the Japanese in Burma.<sup>43</sup>

Following the First Burma Campaign, Stilwell developed a plan to reform the NRA. The outline of his plan consisted of concentrating the NRA into fully manned and equipped divisions, as opposed to distributing soldiers and lend-lease equipment across China's near 300 divisions. He attempted to convince the Generalissimo to accept his plan on 26 May 1942. In a memorandum accompanying his brief, Stilwell wrote:

A better system of supply and transport must be set up. The medical service must be organized in units that can move at once to serve any theater of operations. The situation looks dark, but it can be saved by a vigorous and immediate overhaul of the entire organization. The Army will be smaller, but it will be more efficient and easier to supply and handle.<sup>44</sup>

Stilwell's idea for creating NRA units capable of defeating the Japanese Army depended on reforming the NRA's organization, especially sustainment units.

The Generalissimo, trying to maintain his balance on top of the Chinese power structure, did not respond to Stilwell's request. In mid-June 1942, Stilwell acknowledged the obstacle to gaining Chiang's approval in his diary. He wrote, "The Chinese government is a structure based on fear and favor. . .[i]t is interlaced with family ties and influences, which could easily tear it to pieces if pulled out."<sup>45</sup> Stilwell required the ability to generate a capable Chinese combat force despite the fragmented Chinese political system, which relied on the distribution of resources to

---

<sup>43</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 2 April 1942, in *Stilwell Papers*, 80-81.

<sup>44</sup> Stilwell, "Notes for Generalissimo, 26 May 1942," in Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 154; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Personal File: China-Burma-India 1942-1944* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1976), 237.

<sup>45</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 19 June 1942, in *Stilwell Papers*, 115.

maintain political loyalty. This system opposed the idea of concentrating resources into a smaller, but more effective national army.<sup>46</sup>

The First Burma Campaign ended with the 22nd and 38th Divisions retreating into India. These divisions, manned at 25 percent and 50 percent respectively, required replacements, but provided Stilwell with divisions to demonstrate his reforms. Chinese troops retreating from Burma continued to trickle into India throughout the summer. The Generalissimo ordered Stilwell to sustain the troops in India and named Stilwell the commander of Chinese troops in India on 2 July. These divisions provided Stilwell with an opportunity to implement his proposed reforms.<sup>47</sup>

The British provided Stilwell an old German-Italian prisoner of war camp at Ramgrah to lodge and train the Chinese units in India. Stilwell, originally desiring to create thirty Chinese divisions, modified his plan at Ramgrah to just bringing the 22nd and 38th Divisions to full strength and developing three artillery regiments and an engineer regiment. Satisfied with Stilwell's work, the Generalissimo promised an additional 23,000 soldiers to complete Stilwell's plan by September 1942.<sup>48</sup>

As the replacements arrived, Stilwell learned that he had to confront the poor health condition of the Chinese soldiers before instituting his training regime. The soldiers, flown from China to India by transport aircraft under Stilwell's command, arrived at Ramgrah suffering from a variety of illnesses, including malnutrition. Recognizing that Ramgrah had insufficient medical capacities, he temporarily assigned the 98th Station Hospital to Ramgrah to assist the Seagrave Hospital Unit. This decision increased the hospital bed capacity at Ramgrah from 750 to 1350. Stilwell visited the Ramgrah training facility and met with the officers to provide his intent for the

---

<sup>46</sup> Frank McLynn, *The Burma Campaign: Disaster Into Triumph, 1942-45* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 113-14.

<sup>47</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Personal File: China-Burma-India 1942-1944*, 237; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 140-41; 192.

<sup>48</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 213.

medical reception of Chinese soldiers. Dr. Seagrave, who walked out of Burma with Stilwell during the First Burma Campaign, said Stilwell addressed the officers and explained his purpose for training the Chinese at Ramgrah. He asked the officers to heal the sick Chinese as fast as possible to get them into the training program at the earliest possible moment. Seagrave and the officers interpreted this guidance to mean imposing standard nutrition programs, alternative medicine, and experimental treatments. The constant supply of food, medical care, and sanitation at the camp improved the soldiers' lives and readied them for training.<sup>49</sup>

At Ramgrah, Stilwell also had the opportunity to observe Chinese officers caring for their soldiers. Seagrave reported that he saw Major General Sun, the commander of the 38th Division and hero from the Irrawaddy Valley, visiting his hospitalized soldiers at Ramgrah. Sun's concern for his soldiers further solidified Stilwell's opinion of him. Many Chinese officers did not follow Sun's example and Stilwell relieved them for not meeting his expectations of combat leaders.<sup>50</sup>

While the soldiers recuperated, Stilwell's relationship with his new executive officer did not produce the benefits he had hoped for when Lo replaced Lin Wei. The relationship soured when Stilwell refused to provide the lump sum of money to Lo to pay for the troops at Ramgrah. To avoid the customary Chinese practice of skimming funds, Stilwell elected to pay the troops directly, and he appointed Brig. Gen. Haydon L. Boatner as the executive officer of Chih Hui Pu, or the Chinese Army in India. With less than nine months in CBI, Stilwell felt trust improving between himself and the Generalissimo, but he could not find a trusted Chinese deputy.<sup>51</sup>

In August 1942, Secretary of War Henry Stimson ordered a plan to restore the Burma-Yunnan Road. The Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) considered the plan during the first half of 1943 after the United States and Great Britain agreed to a mid-November Burma campaign at the

---

<sup>49</sup> Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns*, 40-41.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 217.

Casablanca Conference, January 1943. The CCS discussed an offensive campaign into Burma again at the Trident Conference, May 1943, in Washington, DC. Stilwell, along with Lord (Admiral) Louis Mountbatten, attended the conference. He argued for a ground offensive into Burma, but the British declined to participate, even though they had advocated for such an action five months earlier at Casablanca. The British cited Burma's topography and the Generalissimo's refusal to commit his eleven Yunnan divisions to the campaign. Trident ended with the United States and Great Britain postponing a decision on a campaign into Burma until the Cairo Conference.<sup>52</sup>

At Trident, Chiang also pushed President Roosevelt to intervene and direct the distribution of hump tonnage. By the start of 1943, the relationship between Stilwell and the Generalissimo began to deteriorate. The Generalissimo, as the Supreme Commander and Stilwell's nominal superior, went to Washington, DC to meet with President Roosevelt about the tonnage of lend-lease supplies flown over the "hump" to China. The hump referred to the air LOC over the Himalayan Mountains, which connected India to China. The tonnage for equipment the US Tenth Air Force flew over the hump during the last few months of 1942 averaged around 3,000 tons. The low tonnage resulted from the German capture of Tobruk, which influenced the Allies air transport priorities, and Stilwell's desire to train and equip the NRA for his North Burma Campaign. In addition to serving as Chiang's deputy, he also served as the US Lend-Lease Administrator, the Deputy Commander for Southeast Asia Command under Lord Mountbatten, and commander of US Forces in CBI, including the Army Air Force in the India-Burma Sector. This meant Stilwell controlled the type and amount of lend-lease supplies that the Army Air Force flew into China. Stilwell, who favored arming NRA divisions first, did not

---

<sup>52</sup> British Chiefs of Staff, "Operations from India: Dated 14 May 1943" in *Inter-Allied Conference: Proceedings of the American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington DC May 1943* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003), 52-56.

resource the Generalissimo's priority to arm Chinese and US Air Force units fighting the Japanese in Eastern China. Chiang demanded the United States increase the tonnage to 10,000 to support air operations in Eastern China.<sup>53</sup>

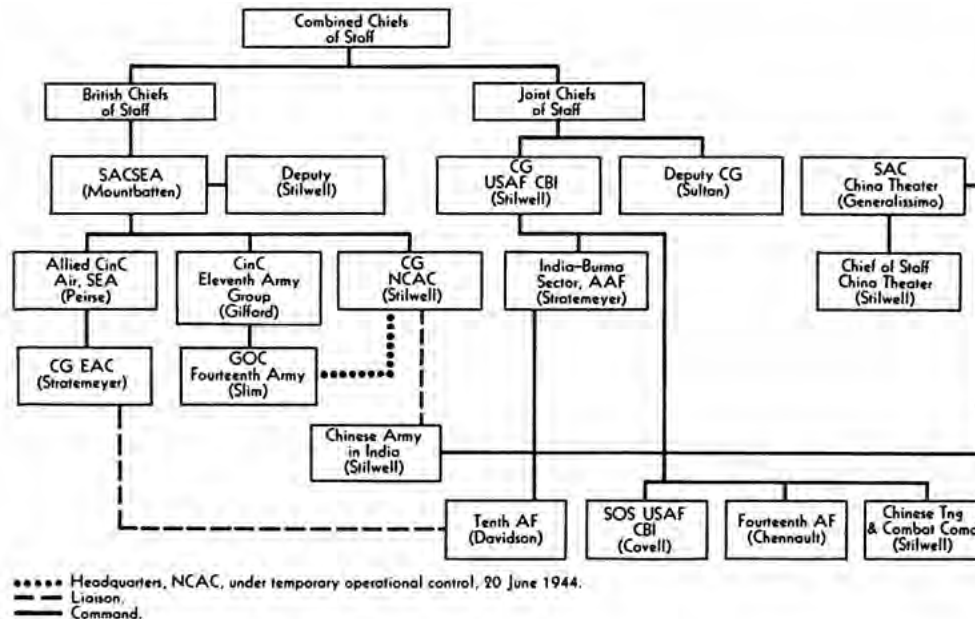


Figure 2. Stilwell's Positions in South East Asia Command. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 6.

Chiang, faced with a Japanese offensive in Eastern China, desired tonnage to be directed to Chinese and American air forces directly confronting the Japanese offensive. Stilwell, skeptical of airpower, remained focused on using lend-lease tonnage to build up the NRA so it could defeat the Japanese Army. Roosevelt's decision promised Chiang that the US War Department would deliver 7,000 tons of lend lease in July and increase to 10,000 tons by September. His decision further dictated the apportionment of the tonnage. He ordered the 4,750 tons to go to the air forces and 2,250 tons to support all other requirements in the CBI Theater. Roosevelt's decision left Stilwell with 500 tons a month to prepare for an offensive into Burma. Stilwell lamented what

<sup>53</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 358-59; Ching-chun, *Stilwell in China*, 54-56.



he saw as an illogical decision, which denied him the resources to prepare for the campaign pending final decision at the Cairo Conference.<sup>54</sup>

The argument over the lend-lease tonnage flown over the hump exposed a cleavage between the United States, especially Stilwell, and the Chinese. Stilwell, from the Generalissimo's point-of-view, prioritized re-establishing the ground LOC to China, while Chiang focused on the entirety of the Chinese Theater. Even when trying to meet Roosevelt's 10,000 ton goal, the enemy intervened. By mid-October 1943, the Japanese began to attack aircraft flying over the hump. Stilwell, disappointed at the loss of four aircraft on 14 October 1943, ordered flights over the hump to occur only during the night. Stilwell's order further suppressed hump tonnage, impeding the Allies ability to increase lend-lease deliveries to China, while increasing the tension between him and the Generalissimo.<sup>55</sup>

In preparation for the Cairo Conference in November 1943, Stilwell decided to use his Chinese divisions at Ramgrah to attack into the northwestern portion of Burma, where he believed the Japanese had yet to occupy. The first combat action since the First Burma Campaign started poorly. Stilwell ordered the campaign to begin on 5 October. Stilwell left Boatner to supervise the campaign while he travelled to China to meet the Generalissimo followed by a trip to India to meet Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command. Sun delayed the operation because he disagreed with Boatner's assessment of enemy strength in the Hukawng Valley. The disagreement climaxed with Sun demanding Boatner's relief and replacement with a Chinese officer. Stilwell refused, and Chiang recalled him to Chungking to explain the situation. At the same time, Chiang expressed his desire for Stilwell's relief to Roosevelt, claiming he had lost the faith of the Chinese soldiers in his command.

---

<sup>54</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 371-72; Stilwell, "Undated Summary of Washington Conference, May 1943," in *Stilwell Papers*, 204-05; Ching-chun, *Stilwell in China*, 53.

<sup>55</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 7-15 October 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 230.

Roosevelt agreed to recall Stilwell believing he represented an obstacle to Sino-American relations. Stilwell believed T. V. Soong, Chiang's brother-in-law and Minister of Foreign Affairs, orchestrated the relief attempt. Soong, who disagreed with the need for a Burma campaign, had been in correspondence with Sun. The attempt for Stilwell's relief failed due to an intervention by the Soong's sisters, Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Sun Yat-sen, as well as Lord Mountbatten. The intervention concluded with Soong's sisters lobbying Chiang to allow Stilwell to remain in China as long as he apologized to Chiang for not conforming to his priorities. Stilwell complied with the Soong sister's instructions and by 6 November Chiang's approach changed as he began to prepare for attendance at the Cairo Conference with Stilwell. According to Chiang, the Cairo Conference represented a watershed because it was the first time that China received representation at an Allied conference.<sup>56</sup>

Prior to the Generalissimo and Stilwell's reconciliation, the 38th Division entered the Hukawng Valley on 27 October 1943. Stilwell defended his movement into Burma citing guidance from the Trident Conference, which ordered him to prepare for an offensive. Stilwell interpreted "prepare" as meaning to secure the first significant obstacle in his path, the Tarung-Tanai river line, and build the necessary infrastructure to sustain the impending campaign, which he estimated could start as early as December. He began these preparations without approval from the CCS although he did brief his plan to Mountbatten and Gen. George C. Marshall, who in Stilwell's words, told him, "go over there [Burma] and get that operation put on."<sup>57</sup> Through Boatner and Chih Hui Pu, Stilwell ordered Sun to send the 2nd Battalion, 112th Regiment, to occupy Sharaw Ga and the 1st Battalion, 112th Regiment, to seize Yupbang Ga on the Tarung River. Additionally, the orders required Sun to send the 3rd Battalion, 112th Regiment, to occupy

---

<sup>56</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 393-95; Stilwell, Diary Entry, 6 November 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 237-38; Chiang Kai-shek, "A Solid Foundation For Victory, 1 January 1944," in *The Collected Wartime Messages of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek 1937-1945* (New York: John Day, 1946), 778-80.

<sup>57</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 3 November, in *Stilwell Papers*, 236.

Ngajatzup on the Tanai River in the Taro Plain. Sun's occupation of these villages allowed him to control the fording sites on the Tarung and Tanai Rivers. His control of the defensible Tarung-Tanai River line would allow American and Chinese engineers to improve the Ledo Road up to the front line of Sun's division. The 38th Division of the NRA entered the Hukawng Valley with a single regiment to prepare the Ledo Road to serve as the primary LOC for the North Burma Campaign. The US Army sustained this force with air and ground resupply, engineers, quartermasters, and a hospital unit.<sup>58</sup>

Stilwell's plan assumed the Japanese did not occupy the Hukwang Valley. As he and his subordinates prepared for the offensive during the approaching dry season, December to May, so did the Japanese 15th Army. Expecting an Allied offensive, the Japanese prepared to launch a spoiling attack against British bases at Imphal and Kohima. In North Burma, the 15th Army also expected an attack from the Chih Hui Pu along the Ledo Road. The 15th Army dispatched the Japanese 18th Division to delay the advance in the northern portion of the Hukawng Valley, where the Ledo Road enters the valley from the constricted terrain on the Indian side of the border. The quick advance of the 18th Division caused the 38th Division to arrive at Sharaw Ga and Yupbang Ga to find the Japanese already positioned in a defensive posture on Sun's objective.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 45, 48.

<sup>59</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems*, 46-47.

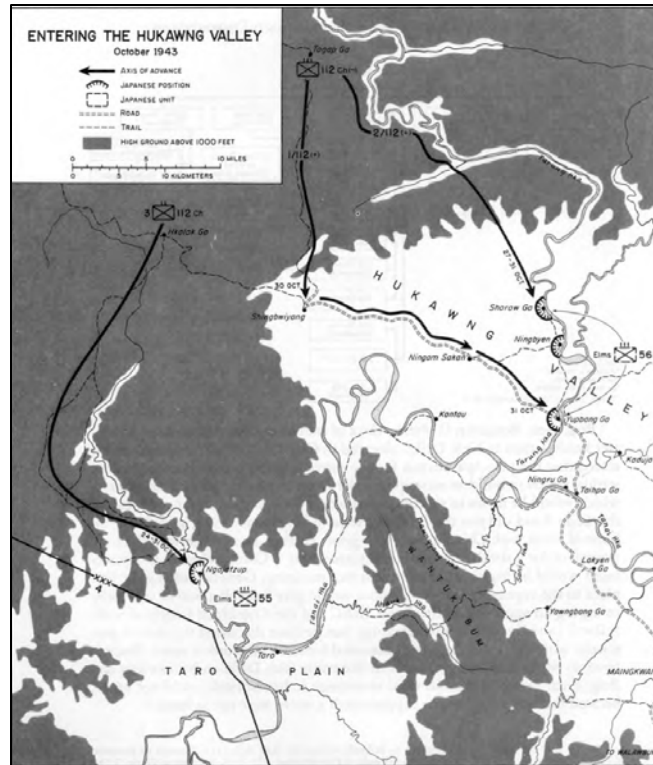


Figure 3. Entering the Hukawng Valley, October 1943. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 44.

Boatner's orders to Sun limited him to the use a single regiment to secure the Tarung-Tanai river line. The river line exceeded thirty miles in length and the Wantuk Bum separated the southern battalion from the two northern battalions. The inflexibility of his orders caused Sun's division to experience a near disaster at the river line. The Japanese surrounded the 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, at Yupbang Ga. The battalion assumed a defensive position to preserve as much of its strength as possible. Boatner, and Stilwell when he returned, had to resupply the surrounded battalion by airdrop. Sun's lead regiment, with three battalions advancing online unable to support each other, entered into a stalemate in the Hukawng Valley. Sun, unable to use his other regiments, could not break the impasse.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems*, 46-48.

During the stalemate in the Hukawng Valley, Stilwell accompanied the Generalissimo to the Cairo Conference. Prior to departure, Chiang promised Stilwell 50,000 troops for the North Burma Campaign. Two days later, Stilwell discussed the replacements with Gen. Ho Ying-chin, the Chief of Staff of the NRA. The discussion ended with Stilwell expecting 11,000-12,000 of the promised 50,000 replacements. Stilwell departed for Cairo with at least a sign that the Generalissimo supported his North Burma Campaign.<sup>61</sup>

The Sextant Conference in Cairo, as well as the Tehran Conference with the Soviet Union days later, committed the Allies to a cross-channel invasion of the European continent in mid-1944. The resources required for the invasion caused Great Britain to decline to participate in an offensive campaign into Burma. This decision reaffirmed the primacy of the European Continent to Allied strategy. Disappointed, Chiang declined to allow Stilwell the use of the Yunnan force for the North Burma Campaign. However, he did permit Stilwell the continued use of the Chih Hui Pu divisions that Stilwell trained at Ramgrah. The divisions consisted of the 38th and 22nd Divisions, which had already been committed to the offensive, as well as a third division completing its training at Ramgrah. Stilwell viewed Chiang's permission to command Chih Hui Pu as a "blank check" to continue his campaign as far as Myitkyina. Stilwell appreciated this sign of Chiang's confidence and knew he had to show results to maintain the Generalissimo's ever-changing mood toward himself and the North Burma Campaign.<sup>62</sup>

By December 1943, the situation in the Hukawng Valley started to deteriorate. Boatner, commanding in Stilwell's absence, fell ill with pneumonia. Moreover, Sun asked to retreat back

---

<sup>61</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 5 November 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 237; Stilwell, Diary Entry, 7 November 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 238.

<sup>62</sup> White, *Stilwell Papers*, 263, 269; Stilwell, Diary Entry, 19 December 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 266.

to India due to Japanese strength. Stilwell, sensing that his campaign was in danger of failing, arrived in North Burma on 21 December, to regain the initiative at Yupbang Ga.<sup>63</sup>

Upon his arrival in the valley, Stilwell established his headquarters at Shingbuiyang due to its proximity to Yupbang Ga and Sun's besieged battalion. Stilwell reconnoitered the area and conferred with Sun. He learned the Japanese failed to secure the Kantau ford, which crosses the Tanai River. This error provided a north-to-south crossing point allowing the Chinese to cross the Tanai and move east to establish a blocking position on the southern bank of the Tanai River where the Ledo Road crossed at Taihpa Ga. Stilwell asked Sun to brief him on his plan to gain the initiative.<sup>64</sup>

Sun planned an envelopment of the Japanese from the north and south. He briefed Stilwell that he intended to send a battalion across the Kantau ford to attack the Japanese southern flank and two companies from another battalion against the northern flank. Stilwell vetoed Sun's plan for a northern envelopment. Concerned about the Japanese's strength in a prepared defense, he integrated Chinese artillery and US close air support into Sun's plan. He also told Sun to use an entire regiment to attack Yupbang Ga and relieve the 1st Battalion, 112th Regiment. Then he told Sun to attack Taihpa Ga to secure the Ledo Road crossing point in the village. The meeting of the two wings of the envelopment at Taihpa Ga would eliminate the only motor vehicle crossing point across the Tanai River, posing a dilemma to the Japanese defenders: retreat or remain in the defense without sustainment. Stilwell left Sun with an approved concept of the operation, shared understanding, and less than two days to prepare for the attack on Yupbang Ga.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 78-79.

<sup>64</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 420; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 124.

<sup>65</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 125; Stilwell, Diary Entry, 22 December 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 273; Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns*, 104.



Figure 4. Operations in Northern Hukawng Valley, January 1944. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 132.

At 0840, 24 December 1943, Stilwell arrived at the command post for 3rd Battalion, 114th Regiment, to watch the engagement at Yupbang Ga. Two Chinese batteries fired 370 artillery rounds at the Japanese beginning at 0900. The artillery fire mission ceased at 1000 and the 1st Battalion, 114th Regiment, led by Major Peng Ke-li, attacked the Japanese southern flank at Yupbang Ga. Peng established contact with the besieged 1st Battalion, 112th Regiment, by 1515 and surrounded the Japanese before nightfall. The last enemy machinegun fell silent the following morning and by, 29 December, the enemy defensive position became untenable along the Tarung River.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry, 24 December 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 274; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems*, 126-27.

The tactical victory at Yupbang Ga immediately increased the morale in Chih Hui Pu and across the CBI Theater. The 38th Division lost 315 killed and 429 wounded during the engagement. Despite the losses, the engagement produced the first Chinese victory in Burma. Yupbang Ga invigorated Chih Hui Pu by proving they could defeat the Japanese. For Stilwell, he reflected on Yupbang Ga in his diary writing: “Good work by the Chinese: aggressive attack, good fire control, quick action.”<sup>67</sup> For Stilwell, Yupbang Ga proved that a well-led and resourced NRA division could defeat the Japanese.<sup>68</sup>

Stilwell’s efforts to man, train, and equip Chih Hui Pu, as well as his leadership during the tactical engagement, provides a limited explanation of the success at Yupbang Ga. A more complete account values the leadership environment Stilwell established while preparing for the campaign during the summer and fall of 1943. His development of a system to deliver supplies and treat casualties built a cohesive team between the Americans and Chinese, enabling the latter to overwhelm the Japanese in the Hukawng Valley.

Stilwell required the means to transport large amounts of soldiers and supplies from Ledo and Ramgrah to the front lines during the campaign. At first, he envisioned a simple ground LOC capable of supporting jeep traffic by connecting the Ledo Road with dirt trails. The Ledo Road project stalled during the summer of 1943. Stilwell sent Merrill, CBI’s operations officer at the time, to inspect the road. In a report dated 29 June, Merrill attributed the lack of progress to CBI lead engineer Brig. Gen. John C. Arrowsmith’s ineffective leadership. After reading the report, Stilwell went to visit the project himself. After his visit, Stilwell recorded in his diary:

The roads in the base are good, but the [Ledo] road itself has been standing still.  
“General” Arrowsmith commands from his chateau. . .and God knows who is running the

---

<sup>67</sup> Stilwell, Diary Entry 29 December 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 274-75.

<sup>68</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 420; Ching-chun, *Stilwell in China*, 175.



road. Arrowsmith is a sulky, indifferent bird, who can't see that this is the chance of a lifetime. You wouldn't catch him out in the mud, pushing.<sup>69</sup>

Stilwell, knowing he needed a leader to reinvigorate the project, relieved Arrowsmith. The War Department sent him Colonel Lewis Pick as a replacement.<sup>70</sup>

Pick assumed command of the combined American and Chinese engineer regiments constructing the Ledo Road beginning on 17 October 1943. He revitalized the road-building project as a result of four actions. First, he moved the Road Headquarters twelve miles behind the most forward engineer unit constructing the road. Second, he maintained 24 hour operations by developing improvised illumination devices. Third, he integrated the 1883rd Engineer Aviation Battalion, 209th Engineer Battalion, and the 76th Engineer Light Pontoon Company into the campaign. These units allowed the CBI senior command to establish intermediate staging bases and airfields along the Ledo Road, empowering Stilwell to move personnel and equipment to the decisive place and time on the battlefield. Lastly, Pick convinced Stilwell that the campaign needed a military highway, as opposed to a route trafficable only by jeep. He promised Stilwell he could build this highway from Ledo to Shingbuiyang to support Sun's offensive by the New Year. To make good on his promise, Pick sent Colonel James Truitt to resurvey the road. Dr. Seagrave also sent an officer with Truitt to ensure the concept of medical support conformed with changes to the LOC and basing along the LOC. As the campaign approached, Stilwell began synchronizing maneuver, mobility, and sustainment. In Pick, he found a leader who could build the bases and LOC between the bases to support his offensive from Ledo to Myitkyina.<sup>71</sup>

An effective sustainment plan includes a concept of medical support. Stilwell had Dr. Seagrave integrate the American and Chinese concept of medical support. During the eighteen

---

<sup>69</sup> Stilwell, Undated Diary Entry, August 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 218.

<sup>70</sup> Leslie Anders, *The Ledo Road: General Joseph W. Stilwell's Highway to China* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 81.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-90, 97.

months at Ramgrah, Seagrave assigned Major Sigafops to train the Chinese battalion medical officers. When Sun's first regiment crossed into Burma in late October 1943, each of his three columns had a portion of Seagrave's medical unit following behind to provide medical support to the Chinese. Once Sun's division captured Shingbuiyang, the engineers established an airfield at the village and Stilwell assigned the 151st Medical Battalion to the village. This allowed the litter bearers from the Chinese transport company to move casualties in the Hukawng Valley to Shingbuiyang in 3 to 5 hours so the surgeons could stabilize the casualties, load them onto US aircraft, and fly them to Ledo for hospitalization and recovery. Stilwell's use of aircraft precluded the transport of casualties by truck on a route extending over 100 miles back to Ledo.<sup>72</sup>

The forward positioning of medical and evacuation support emboldened the Chinese soldiers. They felt encouraged in the knowledge that they had a significant chance of surviving wounds sustained on the battlefield since the forward positioning of medical support resulted in a mortality rate of less than three and a half percent for soldiers who arrived at a medical battalion. The medical support provided by CBI increased the willingness of the Chinese soldiers to fight during the campaign.<sup>73</sup>

After Yupbang Ga, Stilwell concluded that he had the initiative and began to exploit it. He steadily pushed forward through the jungle, capturing Taihpa Ga, 1 February, and Maingkwan during the first week of March. The capture of Maingkwan represented the first time an American combat unit, Merrill's Marauders, accompanied a Chinese division in combat. The succession of victories changed the British and Chinese perception of the combat effectiveness of Stilwell's divisions. Even T. V. Soong sent a message to Stilwell apologizing for his attempt to have Stilwell relieved at the campaign's beginning. Soong said he hoped Stilwell understood his position. Stilwell, in a letter to his wife wrote, "I understand all right. I think we have proved that

---

<sup>72</sup> Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns*, 40-41.

<sup>73</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 422.

the Chinese can fight, and you may remember how many people agreed with me on this point.”<sup>74</sup> With both villages secured, Pick’s engineers established airfields in each. Impressed with Stilwell’s success, Chiang agreed to send him the 14th Division and 50th Division to accompany the Ledo Force. Stilwell moved the divisions from China between 1 April and 15 April. He flew the 50th Division directly to Maingkwan so that they would be positioned forward enough to quickly start the Battle of Myitkyina, which raged from March to August of 1944. Stilwell sent Seagrave’s hospital unit to receive the 50th Division. Seagrave wrote in his memoirs, “It was plain that Stilwell wanted us to do as we had at Ramgrah: get the sick into wards as rapidly as possible, cure them, and rush them out to combat.”<sup>75</sup> Seagrave and his medical unit had a regiment of the 50th Division ready for combat by 21 April 1944.<sup>76</sup>

Stilwell’s combined American and Chinese force seized the airfield at Myitkyina on 17 May 1944, and the battle for the city lasted until August. The unit seizing the airfield on the first day consisted on the 5307th Composite Unit, known as Merrill’s Marauders, and the 150th Regiment, 50th Infantry Division. Once the seizure was complete, a company from Pick’s 879th Airborne Engineer Battalion repaired the runway. The first flights included additional engineers and a British air defense artillery unit to defend the airstrip. On the first day, Stilwell began flying NRA battalions directly into Myitkyina to sustain the fight for the city. Later, a British civil affairs unit arrived to administer the liberated civilians and the areas of the city abandoned by the Japanese. Stilwell and his staff provided a steady flow of reinforcements and supplies by air to Myitkyina. The Air Transport Command transported 14,000 tons a month to the city during the first five months of the battle. The flights returned with casualties distributing the wounded to

---

<sup>74</sup> Stilwell, “Letter to Mrs. Stilwell, 20 March 1944,” in *Stilwell Papers*, 218.

<sup>75</sup> Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns*, 127.

<sup>76</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell’s Command Problems*, 145, 223; Ching-chun, *Stilwell in China*, 171, 175.

medical units established at Taihpa Ga, Shingbuiyang, and Ledo. Stilwell's integration of maneuver, sustainment, and mobility bolstered the Chinese effort at Myitkyina.<sup>77</sup>

The CCS approved Stilwell's plan to capture Upper Burma by the spring of 1944 at the Sextant Conference in Cairo, November 1943. The capture of Upper Burma allowed the Allies to improve the air route between India and China and moved the Allies toward establishing a road from Ledo to Kunming. The CCS set a target date for the road's completion by 1 January 1945. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang agreed to the offensive under three conditions. The first condition, argued by Chiang, required the campaign to coincide with an amphibious operation. The second and third requirements directed the apportionment of hump tonnage. The requirements dictated that Stilwell could not divert more than 1,100 tons for the campaign without the Generalissimo's permission. Additionally, Stilwell had to maintain 10,000 tons across the hump to sustain the Generalissimo in China. Stilwell and Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer accomplished the goals more or less on time.<sup>78</sup>

The capture of the airfield at Myitkyina resulted in an immediate increase in supplies flown over the hump to China. As Chih Hui Pu and Merrill's Marauders approached Myitkyina, Stilwell managed to move between 10,000–15,000 tons over the hump to China each month. After the capture of the airfield at the end of May, the tonnage to China increased above 20,000 tons during the summer and settled above 30,000 tons during the fall of 1944. The removal of Myitkyina as an airfield for Japanese fighters immediately improved CBI's airlift capacity by allowing flights to occur twenty-four hours a day on a flight path further east in the lower altitudes of the eastern Himalayas.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 158, 201, 223, 226-28.

<sup>78</sup> American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Specific Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 1944," in *Inter-Allied Conference: Proceedings of the American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington, DC, November – December 1943* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003), 67.

<sup>79</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 145, 223; Ching-chun, *Stilwell in China*, 254-55.

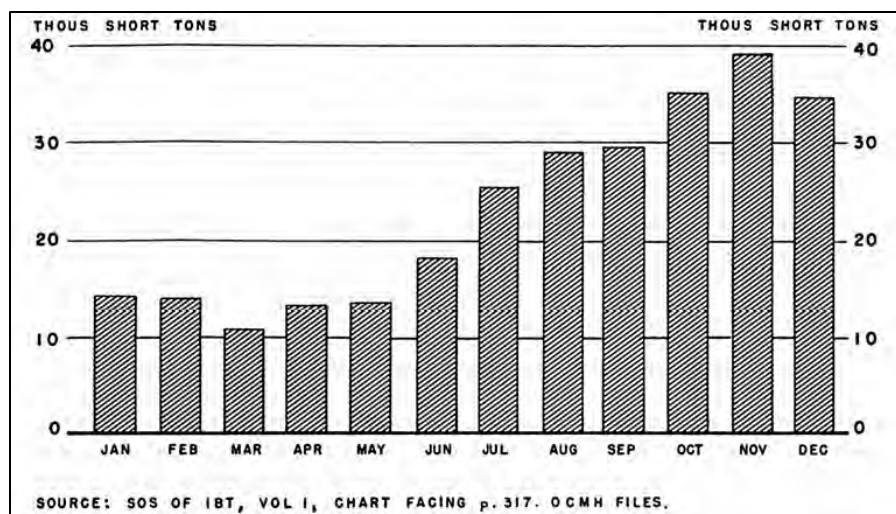


Figure 5. Tonnage Shipped from India to China by Air: 1944. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 132.

At the behest of President Roosevelt, Marshall reassigned Stilwell in October 1944.

Wedemeyer completed Stilwell's mission during the next dry season using Myitkyina as his main base. The first convoy from Ledo arrived to Kunming via the Ledo Road 28 January 1945. Much of the delay occurred due to the presence of Japanese along the route. Sun's division removed the enemy allowing Wedemeyer to establish the land LOC. The completed road and accompanying pipeline allowed the US to transport over 100,000 short tons to China by the summer of 1945.

Stilwell's North Burma Campaign succeeded in meeting its operational objectives.<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion and Implications

A more comprehensive approach to studying the relationship between the Army's operational concept and the mission command philosophy requires the examination of historical multinational campaigns. WWII in general, and the Stilwell case study in particular, provide examples of the US Army's rich history of multinational leadership. The study of the US Army's

<sup>80</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in CBI* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1999), 15, 137, 141.

multinational campaigns can also highlight how US commanders achieved unity of effort while using an operational concept similar to ULO and a command philosophy similar to the mission command philosophy. In particular, Stilwell's North Burma Campaign demonstrated that US Army commanders have historically practiced the six principles of mission command from ADP 6-0 in a multinational setting.

During the planning, preparation, and execution of the campaign, Stilwell applied the mission command philosophy unevenly within his command. The Army defines mission command philosophy as, "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."<sup>81</sup> Mission command's six principles—build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk—highlight the central role of the commander and his relationship to his subordinates.<sup>82</sup> The mission command philosophy and its six principles rose in the Western military tradition. Stilwell expected his superiors to command him in the Western tradition. Stilwell's superiors—General Marshall, Lord Mountbatten, and the Generalissimo—provided Stilwell with the ability to demonstrate his agile and adaptive leadership as he built the Ledo Force and then employed it in combat. In return, Stilwell had regular dialogue with his superiors and kept them informed of his actions in China, Burma, and India. Even though Stilwell expected his superiors to command him within the Western tradition of command, he commanded his subordinates differently based on nationality. His application of the six principles of mission command demonstrates a varied and pragmatic approach to command.

---

<sup>81</sup> ADRP 6-0, 1-3.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 1-3–1-4.

## Building Cohesive Teams through Mutual Trust

Stilwell built cohesive teams through mutual trust with both his American and Chinese subordinates. ADRP 6-0 defines mutual trust as “. . .shared confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners.”<sup>83</sup> Stilwell’s care for the NRA soldier’s health and welfare cultivated trust between the US commander and his Chinese soldiers. Stilwell demonstrated his care through robust health service support. According to ADRP 4-0, *Sustainment*, health service support, “. . .provides continual, flexible, and deployable medical support designed to sustain a force projection Army and its varied missions. The health service support includes—casualty care, medical evacuation, and medical logistics.”<sup>84</sup> Stilwell first demonstrated his care for the Chinese soldiers by ensuring their medical care upon arrival in his command. He assigned Seagrave’s hospital unit to receive the soldiers arriving at Ramgrah following the First Burma Campaign. Stilwell resourced Seagrave to double Ramgrah’s hospital bed capacity. This care extended to the battlefield where Stilwell dedicated several US medical battalions as well as ATC aircraft to evacuate the wounded. Stilwell’s care for the Chinese soldiers in combat increased their chances of survival, resulting in increased morale and a willingness to fight the Japanese.

Similarly, Stilwell built a cohesive team with his American subordinates. The abandonment of the Chinese in Burma following the First Burma Campaign forged a team based on mutual trust. Many of Stilwell’s most trusted subordinates, including Merrill, Boatner, and Seagrave, walked out together. Those that did not walkout of Burma, like Pick, gained Stilwell’s trust through effective leadership and a strong work ethic. Working in a multinational setting, Stilwell desired to forge cohesive teams.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> ADRP 6-0, 2-1.

<sup>84</sup> ADP 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4-11.

<sup>85</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 293-94.

## Create Shared Understanding

Stilwell could not have built trust with his Chinese partners without shared understanding. According to ADRP 6-0, shared understanding requires a commander and his subordinates to engage in dialogue to produce a common understanding of “their operational environment, the operation’s purpose, problems, and approaches to solving them.”<sup>86</sup> Stilwell encouraged dialogue with his American and Chinese subordinates.

Stilwell created shared understanding with his US subordinates who provided sustainment to the NRA divisions. When considering the mission command philosophy, sustainment commanders need to “understand the correlation between each of the warfighting functions and how sustainment impacts each.”<sup>87</sup> Stilwell regularly visited his subordinates responsible for sustaining the campaign to ensure they understood his objectives and intent. An example of Stilwell doing this during the campaign occurred when he visited Seagrave’s hospital unit to ensure they understood the importance of medical reception for NRA soldiers after the First Burma Campaign. He repeated the process when he assigned the hospital unit to Maingkwan to conduct medical reception for the 50th Division and speed one of its regiments to the front to sustain the attack on Myitkyina. Seagrave’s account of Stilwell’s visit to his hospital unit in Maingkwan confirms Stilwell communicated the unit’s role in the greater campaign. Similarly, Stilwell visited Arrowsmith and Pick, the two men responsible for building the Ledo Road. During his visit with Arrowsmith, Stilwell learned he had to replace his senior engineer because he lacked the drive to complete the road in time to support the campaign during the dry season. Stilwell decided to replace Arrowsmith because the lead engineer did not demonstrate an understanding of his importance to the campaign. In contrast, when Stilwell visited Pick, he convinced Stilwell to build a military highway complete with a raised road, drainage, and the

---

<sup>86</sup> ADRP 6-0, 3-2.

<sup>87</sup> ADRP 4-0, 3-2.



width to support two-way traffic. By understanding the operational environment and Stilwell's intent for the campaign, Pick advised his commander on how he could modify the road building project to better support the campaign. By cultivating shared understanding, Stilwell integrated the sustainment warfighting function with the other warfighting functions, creating the ability to project his multinational force from Ledo to Myitkyina.

Stilwell also developed shared understanding with his Chinese subordinates. This occurred in the Hukawng Valley when Stilwell and Sun's dialogue produced a shared understanding of the Japanese 18th Division's location in the valley. This shared understanding of the enemy situation allowed Stilwell and Sun to create a concept of the operation, which relieved the isolated NRA battalion at Yupbang Ga and removed the Japanese from the Valley by using the Kantau ford to seize Taihpa Ga.

## Provide a Clear Commander's Intent and Use Mission Orders

Stilwell displayed a varied approach while issuing his intent and mission orders to subordinates. According to ADRP 6-0, a commander's intent "is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state. . . ." <sup>88</sup> The manual also defines mission orders as "directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them." <sup>89</sup> Successful commanders use the mission command philosophy to convey their intent through mission orders, which empower subordinates to demonstrate initiative. Commanders broadly describe what is to be done, not prescribe a solution. Stilwell's intent and orders to Seagrave and Pick left them with the flexibility to determine how to provide medical care or how to build a road from Ledo to the intersection with the Burma Road. Stilwell's

---

<sup>88</sup> ADRP 6-0, 2-3.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

guidance departed from the spirit of contemporary mission command philosophy when commanding his Chinese subordinates due to a low level of cohesiveness and mutual trust.

## Exercise Disciplined Initiative

Stilwell's exercise of the mission command philosophy, as demonstrated at Yupbang Ga, did not permit Sun to freely exercise disciplined initiative. ADRP 6-0 defines disciplined initiative as "action in the absence of orders, when existing orders no longer fit the situation, or when unforeseen opportunities or threats arise."<sup>90</sup> The mission command philosophy enables a commander the ability to command over the depth of the battlefield because the commander possesses subordinates capable of working in his absence. Neither Boatner nor Sun demonstrated the ability to break the impasse at Yupbang Ga while Stilwell prepared for and attended the Cairo Conference. Once Stilwell arrived at Yupbang Ga, he provided detailed instructions to Sun on how to attack the Japanese, including a concept of fire support, the size of units to attack, and the direction these units should approach the enemy. Stilwell trusted Merrill, Seagrave, Boatner, and Pick to operate independently during the campaign, but he did not provide Sun with the same freedom to demonstrate his initiative. Due to his ability to rely on his subordinates in the rear area, Stilwell had the ability to attend to his NRA subordinates in contact with the Japanese.

## Accept Prudent Risk

Stilwell accepted prudent risk by initiating the campaign without orders from the CCS and sustaining the campaign during the monsoon season. ADRP 6-0 defines prudent risk as the "deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment as worth the cost."<sup>91</sup> He accepted risk and exercised disciplined

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 2-5.

initiative by starting the North Burma Campaign before he received the formal authority to do so from the CCS. Stilwell made the decision because he needed to start the campaign at the beginning of the dry season in order to facilitate the faster movement of units, especially the engineers building the Ledo Road. Had Stilwell waited until he had the authority from the CCS, he would have constricted his own timetable, impeding his ability to reach Myitkyina during 1944.

Stilwell's performance in the CBI Theater during his North Burma Campaign provides a historical case study of achieving unity of effort while using an operational concept similar to ULO and the mission command philosophy. Stilwell succeeded in his campaign by seizing Myitkyina and positioning his multinational force in a position to restore the LOC between India and China by January 1945. Due to the depth of the campaign, Stilwell required agile and adaptive American leaders whom he could trust to operate independently. He led these leaders in accordance with the mission command philosophy. For the Chinese leaders, like Sun, Stilwell required the ability to apply as many of the principles of the mission command philosophy as possible, especially building teams through mutual trust, creating shared understanding, and accepting prudent risk with foreign troops. Stilwell's NRA division commanders did not display the ability to accept his intent and exhibit disciplined initiative, which forced him to remain near the front from Yupbang Ga until Maingkwan. Leaders should attempt to develop the capacity to apply as many of the principles of mission command as possible during multinational operations. Stilwell's campaign succeeded by focusing on the principles that generated trust between multinational partners. Multinational operations requires leaders capable of exercising command using philosophies spanning the range between the mission command philosophy and detailed command based on the context of the situation and the alliance.

## Bibliography

- Adams, John A. *General Jacob Devers: World War II's Forgotten Four Star*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff Immediate Assistance to China, January 10, 1941." in *Inter-Allied Conference: Proceedings of the American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington DC On Twelve Occasions between December 24, 1941 and January 14, 1942*. Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003.
- American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Specific Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 1944." in *Inter-Allied Conference: Proceedings of the American-British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington DC, November – December 1943*. Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003.
- Anders, Leslie. *The Ledo Road: General Joseph W. Stilwell's Highway to China*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965.
- Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.
- Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016.
- Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016.
- Army Doctrine Reference Publication 4-0, *Sustainment*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- Barnett, A. Doak. *China and the Major Powers in East Asia*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1977.
- Citino, Robert M. *The German Way of War: from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.
- Chapman, Anne W. *The Army's Training Revolution 1973-1990: An Overview*. Fort Monroe, VA: Office of the Command Historian, US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1991.
- Chiang Kai-shek. *The Collected Wartime Messages of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek 1937-1945*. Vol. 2. New York: John Day, 1946.

- Ching-chun Liang. *General Stilwell in China, 1942-1944: The Full Story*. New York: St. John's University Press, 1972.
- Clancy, Tom, and Fred Franks. *Into the Storm: A Study in Command*. New York: Putnam, 1997.
- Dempsey, Martin E. *A White Paper: Mission Command*. Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 3, 2012.
- Dulles, Foster Rhea. *China and America: The Story of Their Relations Since 1784*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- Fenby, Jonathan. *Chiang Kai Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2004.
- Field Manual 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014.
- Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986.
- Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993.
- Field Service Regulations 1905, *Field Service Regulations of the United States Army 1905 with Amendments to 1908*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1908.
- Finney, Nathan K., and Jonathan P. Klug, ed. *Mission Command in the 21st Century: Empowering to Win in a Complex World*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Press, 2016.
- Fischer, Carl W., ed. *Training for Decisive Action Stories of Mission Command*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2014.
- Frame, Adela, and James W. Lussier, ed. *66 Stories of Battle Command*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2000.
- Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.
- Kiser, Andrew J. "Mission Command: The Historical Roots of Mission Command in the US Army." Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2013.
- McLynn, Frank. *The Burma Campaign: Disaster into Triumph, 1942-45*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Moltke, Helmuth von. *Moltke On the Art of War: Selected Writings*. Edited by Daniel Hughes. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995.
- Nelsen II, John T. "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle." *Parameters* (September 1987): 21-34.
- Paine, S. C. M. *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Prefer, Nathan N. *Vinegar Joe's War: Stilwell's Campaigns for Burma*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000.

- Romanus, Charles F., and Riley Sunderland. *Stilwell's Command Problems*. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956.
- . *China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Mission to China*. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953.
- . *China-Burma-India Theater: Time Runs Out in CBI*. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1999.
- . *Stilwell's Personal File: China-Burma-India 1942-1944*. Vol. 1. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1976.
- Seagrave, Gordon S. *Burma Surgeon Returns*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1946.
- Stilwell, Joseph W. *Stilwell Papers*. 1948. Edited by Theodore H. White. Reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- Studies in Battle Command*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1995.
- Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*. Fort Eustis, VA: Training and Doctrine Command, 2014.
- Tuchman, Barbara W. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45*. New York: Macmillan, 1971.
- Wright, Donald, ed. *16 Cases of Mission Command*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013.